

SACRAMENTO SPECTATOR

Your *Spectator*, not usually one to pat his own back, is willing to make an exception today, noting that it was a full four months ago that this column's readers were alerted to a possible Democrat ticket-wide meltdown. If the disarray, fear, and loathing among the Democrats continued, I opined, they might make possible a Republican landslide in November.

Well here we are in October dear ones, and I am appearing downright prescient if I do say so myself. I hereby do.

Indeed, the Democrats *have* continued the angry sniping and internal disintegration, creating the exact opposite of a unified statewide ticket: a bunch of campaigns deathly afraid and highly suspicious of one another. From the undertaker at the top to the Mecha operative running for Insurance Commissioner — and any nominee in-between — these Democrats do not like each other, do not coordinate with each other, and secretly hope several of their “running mates” lose. Harsh, yes, but heard more than once and in tones ‘way above a whisper in several Democrat swank saloons and bistros — visited by me, needless to say, solely in the interest of research.

On the other hand, Republicans, for once, have their act together. While

it's not exactly a “let's all hold hands and sing Kumbaya” love fest up and down this ticket, the campaigns at least communicate and cooperate when it makes sense. The glue that holds the promise of a sweep or near sweep together for the ticket is the structure put together by the California GOP and the Schwarzenegger campaign.

The governor has not, and probably will not, appear at a lot of “everybody raise hands” photo-ops with his fellow



GOP statewide nominees. But he, and the state party, are doing something more important: identifying and communicating with GOP voters on their hot button issues, motivating these voters to vote absentee or at the polls. This is the much-touted “micro-targeting” strategy that reaped large dividends for the GOP in 2002 and 2004.

I’ve heard doubts and guffaws about “micro-targeting” from political pros I respect. But here’s the telling thing for me. I’ve received three separate mail pieces, paid for by the California GOP, urg-

ing me to vote “yes” on the parental-notification-before-a-minor’s-abortion Proposition 85. Attached to each piece of mail were absentee ballot applications already filled out.

To the best of my knowledge, I am not officially a member of any pro-life organization. I may have donated small amounts of money to them, but that would have been in the past when I lived in a different part of the state. Yet this “micro-targeting” effort has correctly identified me as a Prop. 85 supporter, and has already (as of this writing, a full month before the election) sent me *three* pieces of mail on a matter near and dear to my heart.

If that fairly indicates what is happening across the state — and I realize it may not — then the GOP has an enormously effective campaign going on, one that is “below the radar” of the media and even of the Democrat opposition. It has the potential to drive to the polls hundreds of thousands of “value voters” who, like your *Spectator*, are likely to vote a straight GOP ticket once inside the curtained booth.

So don’t be surprised if, on election night, California — in a stark reversal of recent history — emerges as one of the national Republican bright spots. And if it is, remember just where you read it first, and that “micro-targeting” deserves at least some of the credit.
— A.P.C.



The Working Press

L.A. Times targets the 'mainstream reader'

Tortured thought sessions and those tiresome white, middle-class, home-owning Democrats.

GEORGE NEUMAYR

CONSERVATIVES OFTEN speak of the "MSM" — mainstream media — contemptuously. But left-wingers — upset that the mainstream media are settling into a gun-shy, cautious centrism — are piling on too. Reporter Daniel Hernandez recently left the *Los Angeles Times* for *LA Weekly*. His reason: He had grown tired of reporting stories according to the paper's "rigid" formula of pleasing white, middle-class, home-owning Democrats, he said in an August interview with *LAist.com*.

"Shortly after I got there, I started having these long, tortured thought sessions with myself about my participation in the MSM. I saw how the people and places the paper chose to cover were automatically political decisions because for every thing you chose to cover there is something you chose to not cover. I started realizing that the mainstream style on reporting the news that most papers employ is not really concerned with depicting the truth, but concerned primarily with balancing lots of competing agendas and offending the least amount of interests as possible," he said.

"I saw how so much was looked at from certain assumptions and subtexts, and a very narrow cultural view. When I raised questions about such things, I was told we were writing for a 'mainstream reader,' which I quickly figured out is basically a euphemism for a middle-aged, middle-class white registered Democrat homeowner in the Valley. From where I stand today, I had very little in common with this 'mainstream reader' and I didn't care to be in this person's service."

Hernandez' point, apparently, is that the mainstream media isn't sufficiently left-wing, and that he itched to write front-page radical editorials. In the

good old days, before it grew hesitant under the watchful eye of conservatives, the mainstream media appealed to Democrats in all socio-economic categories.

✱ ✱ ✱

Public relations executive Mike Sitrick of Sitrick and Company was the subject of a profile this summer in *Los Angeles Magazine*. The piece noted that the scandal-plagued archdiocese of Los Angeles has appeared on his roster of clients. "Accused of molesting children? Call Mike Sitrick," said the piece. Seth Lubove, the Los Angeles bureau chief of *Bloomberg News Service*, is quoted in the piece as saying: "Mike thinks of himself as a brawler. He's the Jew with a chip on his shoulder. Whenever he goes up against a news organization, he sees himself taking on the *goyim*. He's vicious, and he's proud of it. He's not literally a leg breaker, but metaphorically, sure."

In other words, Cardinal Mahony's kind of guy.

BUT THE story observes that Mahony's retention of Sitrick backfired: "That Sitrick's name is usually connected to bad news is problematic ... At times it seems as if the publicist represents a veritable rogue's gallery. 'When a company hires Sitrick, it immediately tells me that they're in a desperate situation,' says Lubove. 'Hiring him indicates that a client is either in deep sh-t or is about to go after someone. Lately, Mike's taken to asking me not to mention him when he calls to plant a story. But that's always a deal breaker. He's now part of the story.' Indeed, when the archdiocese engaged Sitrick, the *Los Angeles Times* played the news

George Neumayr is California Political Review's press critic.